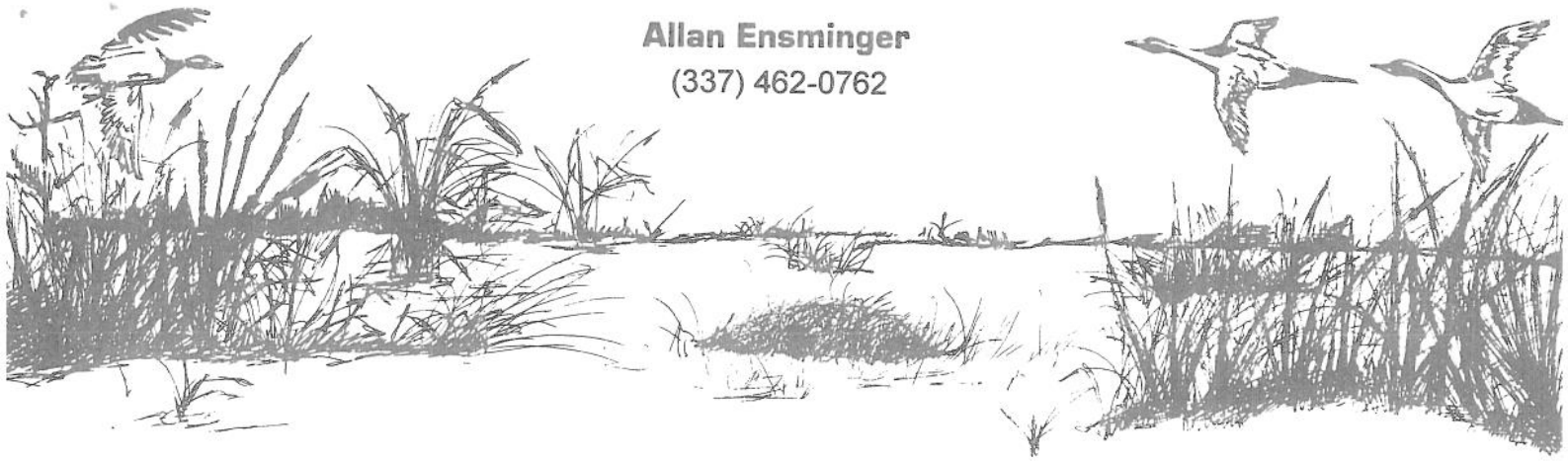

Allan Ensminger
(337) 462-0762

February 20, 2006

Mr. Greg Grandy
Louisiana Dept. of Natural Resources
Coastal Engineering Division
P. O. Box 44027
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4027

Dear Mr. Grandy,

Reference is made to our various conversations and information provided by your staff at the Public Meetings dealing with the Coastal Impact Assistance Program underway for coastal wetlands impacted by Outer Continental Shelf activity. I appreciate the opportunity to offer several projects that clearly qualify with the criteria established for participation in this extremely important program.

As stated in the meetings, many projects that have been under consideration at various levels of implementation for decades will now have a source of funding. This letter will concentrate on projects proposed for protection and restoration of wetland ecosystems on Point au Fer Island located in Terrebonne Parish, Louisiana. Several Coastal Wetland Planning, Protection and Restoration Act projects have been implemented on this true Barrier Island and are producing ecological and biological benefits as anticipated. Each of the CWPPRA projects were standalone endeavors: however: each contain additional restoration features that would enhance and secure their long-term ecological life span.

Dredge and fill activity was an important feature of the Lake Chapeau Hydrologic Restoration Project and has proven to be a worthwhile concept for restoring vegetated marshland in deteriorated conditions. This effort has been so successful until a "small dredge" project is well underway by La. D.N.R. using mitigation funds to augment the footprint of the CWPPRA project. Several hundreds of additional acres of shallow open water exist in this section of the Island and could be filled with material out of adjacent Atchafalaya Bay. This area is one of only a few sites where recruitment of silt can be expected to fill the dredged barrow site by deposition of material during annual river flooding. Oil and gas activity associated with the Point au Fer Oil and Gas Field may have contributed to some of the former marsh deteriorated by allowing saltwater intrusion into the interior wetlands. The existing infrastructure installed by the CWPPRA project has and can continue to address this issue. Additional dredge and fill concepts have been

offered on many occasions by the U. S. National Marine Fisheries Service and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency for this section of the Island.

In addition to the suggested dredge and fill proposal above, shoreline protection and stabilization has also been an important CWPPRA program on the property. Approximately six thousand liner feet of shoreline protection has been installed and has survived frequent storms including Andrew, Lilly, Katrina, and Rita. This facility provides protection to the Lake Chapeau Hydrologic Restoration facilities as well as an important onshore producing oil and gas field adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico. A series of offshore oil and gas pipelines that service offshore oil and gas production comes ashore on the east end of Point au Fer Island and has been addressed by CWPPRA projects. Additional shoreline protection by installing riprap material would assure the longevity of these critical OCS infrastructure facilities.

Shoreline protection for the Gulf of Mexico beach area on Point au Fer Island was made a part of the Louisiana Coastal Area Study and is proposed for consideration in the Near Term (ten year) portion of the study. Shoreline regression at Point au Fer Island has averaged about seventy feet per year over past decades. Encroachment into pristine saline and brackish marshland is ongoing and can only be expected to continue and accelerate as the shoreline moves northward into the more fragile brackish to intermediate ecosystem.

In addition to being a viable Barrier Island, the location of the property is critical to protect the fragile intermediate and fresh marsh complex located in southwestern Terrebonne and eastern St. Mary Parishes during tropical storm events. Also in addition to this priceless physical feature, Point au Fer Island forms the eastern boundary of Atchafalaya Bay and plays an obvious role in helping to retain un-quantified billions of cubic yards of marsh building silt loads each year during deposition by the Atchafalaya River. OCS facilities serviced daily from the Port of Morgan City and the Gulf Intracoastal Water Way depend on a useful navigation channel and development of a viable marshland east of the present channel would provide excellent natural shelter for the waterway.

Over recent decades, a major shoreline breach has developed between the mainland of the Island and the far western tip of the Island where the historic Pointe au Fer Island Lighthouse was located. Restoration of this shoreline has been suggested as a CWPPRA project; however; the cost-benefit-ratio utilized in the program has never been found to be feasible. Funding from CIAP to accomplish closure of this approximately one and one half mile wide opening would be and excellent project with measurable benefits to the OCS and coastal protection programs. Research studies conducted in conjunction with the gradual creation of vegetated marshland within the Atchafalaya Delta Complex has revealed that an extensive amount of silt would accumulate in the southeastern quadrant of the bay system if the above-described shoreline were restored. In addition to the gradual loss of silt into the open Gulf of Mexico through the open shoreline, it is questionable if in fact the change in hydrology within the western end of the Island has

been adversely impacted by the rapid change in daily tidal exchange and may account for some of the export of deteriorated wetlands from the interior of the Island.

In further support for the above listed projects is the fact that Point au Fer Island has provided a significant amount of storm tide damping to inland communities such as Morgan City and Berwick.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit projects for Point au Fer Island that are in line with the criteria of the Coastal Impact Assessment Program and look forward to working with Terrebonne and St. Mary Parishes to accomplish their projects.

Sincerely yours,

Allan B. Ensminger

ABE/me
c.c. Mr. Charles I. Denechaud III
Point au Fer Properties